

“Sexual Purity is Possible” - Ephesians 5:3-4 – June 3rd, 2018

- The titled of today’s teaching is “Sexual Purity is Possible.”

- For what I think should be deemed obvious reasons, I’ll need to ask that you use your discretion concerning those under age.
- Please know that I have no intention to get unnecessarily graphic, however, we have to deal with very mature subject matter.

- In order to better understand what Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus, we need to know a about the worship in Ephesus.
- Namely that of this city being one of the most occultic and sexually immoral cities in that day, as home to the Temple of Diana.
- The Temple of Diana was a place where male and female prostitutes would provide their services under the banner of religion.

- It was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, but it was like a magnet drawing the people to a cesspool of debauchery.
- You can visit the site where this massive temple once stood in the ancient Ephesus, which is located in modern day Turkey.
- However, you should probably know that it’s now a swampland, which to me is apropos given what took place at this Temple.

- The reason I go into such detail about this is because it’s going to be germane to our understanding of what we’re dealing with.
- Specifically as it relates to living sexually pure lives in a sexually immoral culture, much like the church in Ephesus at that time.
- In the text that’s before us today, the Apostle Paul exhorts us concerning the seriousness of sexual immorality as God’s people.

- It’s important to know the word Paul uses for sexual immorality in the original Greek language of the New Testament is porneia.
- This because, it’s where we get our English word, “pornography,” which is a broad word that describes all matters of sexual sin.
- In other words any sexual intercourse outside of the marriage is sexual sin, which as a result makes a person sexually immoral.

- It’s also important to note that Paul connects the dots of sexual immorality and impurity to obscenity, filthy talking and joking.
- The reason is when sexual immorality takes up residence in ones heart; it will be evidenced by what comes out of their mouth.
- I don’t think the importance of guarding ones heart can be overstated, because what’s in our heart will come out of our mouths.

Proverbs 4:23–24 - 23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. 24 Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.

Luke 6:45 - A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

- The question now becomes one of how we are to live sexually pure lives as God’s people, so there’s no hint of this among us.
- I would suggest that the answer is found in what Paul says at the end of verse four about thanksgiving coming out of our mouth.
- When I am the recipient of God’s forgiveness for my sins because of His love while I was yet a sinner, I will walk in obedience.

- A life of purity comes vis-à-vis my response to all God has done for me, in the sense that I love Him because He first loved me.
- Then, when I have this love for God, what comes as a result is that I will want to obey God, such that, it’s a get to not a got to.
- This is why the Apostle Paul listed in grand and glorious detail all God has done for us in the first three chapters of Ephesians.

- Now I am keenly aware that there are those for whom this Christian experience seems not only unattainable but unsustainable.
- By that I mean there are those times that as Christians, one can still fall prey to sexual temptation and in so doing, sin sexually.
- The truth of the matter is that as Christians, it’s not that we can ever this side of heaven be sinless, rather, it’s that we sin less.

1 John 1:8–10 - 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and **His word is not in us.**

Psalms 119:11 - Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

Romans 6:14 - For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

I’ll bring it to a close with one of the best and most freeing truths I’ve ever read concerning Romans 6:14, written by Roy Hession in “Forgotten Factors.” “If we are to experience sin not having dominion over us, we shall have to know truly what it is to be living under grace and not under law. ... If the dominion of sin over us is its power to condemn us, then the holy law of God only adds to that power. In that condition of despair we have little motivation but to commit further sin. ...To understand, then, the true nature of the dominion of sin and what are the devil’s intentions in it is the first step into freedom. We are now ready to hear the message of grace. The grace of God is the love of God in action toward those who deserve nothing and can do nothing. ... Calvary shows us we are loved by God as we are, unconditionally without strings. There Jesus died not only for sin, but to sin. That is how Romans 6:10 puts it: “In that he died, he died unto sin once.” What does that mean? It does not mean that He died to sin’s solicitations (He was never alive to them); but that in paying our debt in His blood He died to sin’s power to condemn Him any longer and therefore God raised Him from the dead. But if at that cross sin lost its power to condemn our Substitute, it has also lost its power to condemn all those whose Substitute He became. If each one of them now returns to the Cross in confession, they may all reckon on this fact, lose their burden of guilt, and step into freedom. ... If we take a long time to do that, we will be a long time under the dominion of sin. But the moment we humble ourselves and confess it all, we are forgiven, cleansed, set free from guilt and declared right with God ... The foundation of guilt on which Satan built his superstructure is removed by God Himself; the superstructure itself comes tumbling down and the one imprisoned within it is set free.”